

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 17, with the following redlined paragraph:

One embodiment of the invention incorporates a pair of adjacent components, one having a tapered female mouth integrally formed thereon for engagement with a complementary tapered male mouth integrally formed on the adjacent component. Each of the mouths has a mating portion. One of the mating portions has a substantially linear cross-sectional profile that is angled between 40 and 68 degrees from a ~~radial axis~~ longitudinal axis of the coupling. The other of the mating portions has a convex, curved cross-sectional profile that engages the linear profile of the other component at a substantially circular seal. The system allows components of like materials to be sealingly engaged with each other without the need of a gasket between the components.

(Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 26, with the following)
redlined paragraph:

Another embodiment of the present invention is directed toward a body having a tapered mouth configured to mate with a complementary mouth on a pressure vessel to form a circular seal therebetween. A contact angle between the adjoining components is tangential to at least one of the components, the tangent measuring between 40 and 60 degrees from a ~~radial axis~~ longitudinal axis of the component.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 14, with the following redlined paragraph:

In the illustrated embodiment, the engagement portion 108 of the check valve 102, the mouths 110/114 on the vessel 104, and the engagement portion 112 on the plug 106 are all ~~radially-axially~~ symmetric with respect to a ~~radial axis~~ "r" longitudinal axis "L" extending along the length of the assembly 100. During operation, the components of the assembly 100 are compressed in the axial direction "r" "L" to form the subject seals.

[Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 19, with the following redlined paragraph:]

Figure 3 provides a better illustration of the mate between the check valve 102 and the vessel 104. When viewed in cross section, the engagement portion 108 on the check valve 102 is convexly curved. The curve can be arcuate, elliptical, or of other suitable shapes. The mouth 110 on the vessel 104 that engages the check valve 102 has a substantially linear cross-sectional profile. The bevel of the mouth 110 of the vessel 104 is oriented at an angle " α " with respect to the ~~radial axis "r"~~ longitudinal axis "L". Accordingly, a contacting portion 116 of the check valve 102 corresponds to the tangent roughly equal to angle " α " when the check valve is aligned axially with respect to the ~~radial axis "r"~~ longitudinal axis "L". The seal between the check valve 102 and the vessel 104 consequently is in the shape of a circle. Depending on the radius of curvature of the cross-sectional profile of the engagement portion 108 of the check valve 102, and depending on the hardness of the material, the circular seal between the check valve and the vessel 104 can form a circle of varying thicknesses.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 3, with the following redlined paragraph:

Similarly, as best illustrated in Figure 4, the vessel 104 contacts the plug 106 to form a circular seal between the mouth 114 having a linear cross-sectional profile, and the engagement portion 112 having a curved cross-sectional profile. The linear cross-sectional profile of the mouth 114 of the vessel body 104 is aligned at an angle " β " with respect to the ~~radial axis "r"~~ longitudinal axis "L". An inwardly facing alignment surface 118 on the vessel 104 mates with a complementary outwardly facing alignment surface 120 on the plug 106 to retain the plug in the proper alignment with respect to the vessel 104. The inventor appreciates that a wide variety of structures could be used to satisfy this purpose. Likewise, the inventor appreciates that the check valve could have a similar feature without deviating from the spirit of the invention.